

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1539

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TEXT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, ILO, ICFTU, WCL, SP
SUBJECT: PRESS SPECULATION ON U.S. INTEREST IN SPANISH LABOR SCENE

SUMMARY. THE SPANISH PRESS HAS CARRIED HIGHLY MISLEADING ACCOUNTS BASED ON HALF-TRUTHS SUGGESTING THAT A) THE SOCIALIST UGT WAS CONSPIRING WITH THE VERTICAL SSO TO TAKE OVER THE SPANISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND B) THE AFL-CIO'S IRVING BROWN WAS INVOLVED IN THIS UNDERTAKING. THE UGT HAS TOLD US THAT THE ACCOUNTS WERE "AN INVENTED STORY, A MANEUVER TO SOW CONFUSION." WE NOTE THAT THE LOCALE IN ALL ACCOUNTS IS GENEVA, AND THAT AT NO POINT IS REFERENCE MADE TO BROWN'S SEVERAL VISITS TO MADRID. HOWEVER, THIS IS A WARNING THAT NO MATTER HOW CIRCUMSPECT BROWN'S VISTS MAY BE, WE CAN EXPECT MORE ILL-FOUNDED CHARGES OF "AMERICAN MEDDLING" AND "CIA INVOLVEMENT".

1. THE SENSATIONALIST AND LEFT-LEANING DIARIO 16 EDITIONS OF FEBRUARY 23 AND 25 CARRIED HIGHLY MISLEADING ACCOUNTS BASED ON HALF-TRUTHS WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS SUGGESTED THAT A) THE SOGIRIIUAS CONSPIRING WITH THE VERTICAL SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO) OT TAKE OVER THE SPANISH
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TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, AND B) THE AFL-CIO'S IRVING BROWN
-- DATEDLINED BRUSSELS UNDER THE BYLINE OF ONE PABLO SEBASTIAN
-- ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.

2. DURING A RECENT MISSION TO GENEVA, SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER DE LA MATA PARTICIPATED IN A CONFIDENTIAL MEETING ARRANGED BY JOSE AGUIRIANO (UGT), ICFTU SEC GEN OTTO KERSTEN AND

AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE IRVING BROWN, ACCORDING TO "RELIABLE SOURCES", AND THE OBJECTIVE OF "THE CREATION IN SPAIN OF A STRONG SOCIALIST TRADE UNION TO STAND UP TO THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS, AND WHICH COULD COUNT ON THE PATRIMONY AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SSO". THE OPERATION, AS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED BY BROWN ("CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE PILLARS OF THE CIA IN EUROPE AND IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT"), CONSISTED IN FORMING A STRONG SOCIALIST UNION AROUND THE UGT, WHICH WOULD EMBRACE THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST USO, WHILE THE BASQUE STV AND THE CATALAN SOC WOULD BE CONVERTED -- "IN THIS SCHEME WHICH SHOWS A CLEAR IGNORANCE REGARDING SPANISH TRADE UNIONISM" -- INTO THE BASQUE AND CATALAN FEDERATIONS OF THE UGT. DURING THE DINNER, HOWEVER, BROWN SURPRISINGLY APPEARED FOR THE FIRST TIME OPPOSED TO CENTRALIZING EVERYTHING IN THE UGT. THE ARTICLE ALLEGED THAT BROWN HAD SAID: "IN THE TIME THAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVING ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO THE UGT, IT HAS NOT DEMONSTRATED THE CAPACITY TO BE A SOCIALIST RALLYING POINT AND HAS, APPARENTLY, PASSED THE MONEY ALONG TO THE PSOE" (SPANISH SOCIALIST PARTY). ALL OBSERVERS AGREE IN BRUSSELS THAT IT WILL BE DE LA MATA AND THE SSO THAT BENEFIT FROM THESE "CONFIDENTIAL NEGOTIATIONS".

3. THE FEBRUARY 25 ACCOUNT, AFTER VERY BRIEFLY NOTING THAT THE UGT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAD FORECFULLY DENIED THE FEBRUARY 23 STORY, LAUNCHED INTO A FURTHER EMBELLISHED ACCOUNT "FROM ITS CORRESPONDENT IN BRUSSELS" AS FOLLOWS. THE WCL (WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR) HAD "OFFICIALLY CONFIRMED" TO DIARIO 16 THAT SUCH A DINNER HAD ACTUALLY TAKEN PLACE IN GENEVA. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE WCL SOURCE FOR THIS INFORMATION WAS ITS SPOKESMAN, INCHAUSTI. IN ADDITION, "SOC SOURCES IN BARCLEONA" HAD CONFIRMED THE WCL STATEMENT. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT IRVING BROWN IS THE MAN IN CONTACT WITH THE UGT AND THE ICFTU. FINALLY, ACCORDING TO DIARIO 16, A UGT MILITANT DECLARED A FEW DAYS AGO IN BRUSSELS -- IN THE PRESENCE OF A SPANISH NEWSPAPERMAN AND SOC INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY JOSE GARGAS -- THAT "THE AMERICAN UNIONS HAD RECENTLY OFFERED THE UGT \$600,000."

4. IN A MORE BALANCED TREATMENT OF THE ALLEGED BROWN - KERSTEN - DE LA MATA MEETING IN GENEVA "ON JANUARY 26", LIBERAL LEFT EL PAIS OF FEBRUARY 26 CARRIED AGUIRIANO'S DENIAL -- "A DISSEMBLANCE PURE AND SIMPLE". AGUIRIANO NOTED THAT THE ONLY DINNER HAD BEEN ONE ATTENDED BY DE LA MATA, FRANCISCO GUERRERO (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, SSO), JAVIER ALBALANTE (SPANISH LABATT, GENEVA) AND HIMSELF DURING THE SYNIDCAL RELATIONS MINISTER'S VISIT TO GENEVA TO SEE ILO SEC GEN BLANCHARD (MADRID 692) ON JANUARY 25. NONETHELESS, EL PAIS (IN A SEPARATE STROY, ALSO ON FEBRUARY 26, BUT DATELINED

BRUSSELS UNDER THE BYLINE OF R. VILARO) STILL CHOSE TO DECLARE THAT "MANY VERSIONS CIRCULATE ABOUT BROWN", AMONG OTHERS, PHILIP AGEE'S STATEMENT IN HIS BOOK THAT BROWN "IS THE PRINCIPAL AGENT OF THE CIA TO CONTROL THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ICFTU". WITHOUT COMMENTING ON WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN GENEVA, "IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE U.S. SECRET SERVICES SEEM TO BE DEMONSTRATING GREAT INTEREST IN THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENT AND, ABOVE ALL, IN THE EVOLUTION OF SPANISH TRADE UNIONS, DO THEY WISH TO ARBITRATE THE LIQUIDATION OF THE SSO? ON THIS, THE DETAILS SHOULD COME FROM THE MADRID SIDE", CONCLUDED EL PAIS.

5. THE UGT TOLD US FEBRUARY 28 THAT THE DIARIO 16 ACCOUNTS WERE AN INVENTED STORY, A MANEUVER TO SOW CONFUSION." THEY POINTED OUT THAT THE WCL SOURCE, INCHAUSTI, WAS AN STV MILITANT WHO HAD IT IN FOR BOTH THE UGT AND THE ICFTU. AS A MATTER OF FACT, AGUIRIANO WAS CONSIDERING SUING HIM FOR LIBEL. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SO-CALLED SOC "CONFIRMATION" OF THE FICTITIOUS GENEVA DINNER COULD PROBABLY ALSO BE TRACED TO INCHAUSTI, FOR THE SOC BELONGED TO THE WCL, NOT THE ICFTU. WE NOTE THAT THE LOCALE OF THE FICTITIOUS DINNER IN ALL THE ACCOUNTS IS GENEVA, AND THAT AT NO POINT IS REFERENCE MADE TO ANY OF BROWN'S SEVERAL TRIPS TO MADRID SINCE JANUARY (MADRID 453 AND 1025). HOWEVER, THIS IS A WARNING THAT NO MATTER HOW CIRCUMSPECT BROWN'S VISITS MAY BE (HE HAS MADE IT A POINT TO AVOID THE PRESS AND ANY PUBLICITY), WE CAN EXPECT MORE ILL-FOUNDED CHARGES OF "AMERICAN MEDDLING" AND "CIA INVOLVEMENT".

6. FOR THE RECORD, IT IS TRUE THAT BROWN, DE LA MATA, AND KERSTEN WERE ALL IN GENEVA ON JANUARY 25. BUT THERE WAS NO DINNER. BROWN DID MEET ALONE WITH DE LA MATA, ALSO RAN INTO KERSTEN AT THE ILO. DE LA MATA, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, HAPPENED TO SEE KERSTEN AT THE AIRPORT AS HE WAS DEPARTING FOR MADRID, AND TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE THE ICFTU SEC GEN TO DINE WITH HIM IN MADRID WHEN HE PASSED THROUGH (MADRID 858).

7. FOR GENEVA, WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF LABATT COULD INFORM BROWN AND BOGGS OF SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE. BOGGS PLANS TO VISIT MADRID MARCH 6-8. STABLER

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